

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 508
By Henry

A RESOLUTION to recognize Ms. Donna Hilley on the occasion of her retirement from Sony/ATV Music Publishing Nashville.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those outstanding citizens who have utilized their personal strength, faith and business acumen to establish themselves as world-renowned leaders in the music industry; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable person is Donna Hilley, President and Chief Executive Officer of Sony/ATV Music Publishing Nashville, who after 31 years of service with the company has recently taken a much deserved retirement; and

WHEREAS, as President and CEO of the world's largest country music publisher, Donna Hilley made her mark on the music industry in Nashville and around the globe, indelibly establishing her reputation as a dynamic deal-maker, an industry visionary, and a savvy professional who blazed new trails for women in the music industry; and

WHEREAS, never envisioning a career in the music industry, Donna Hilley took a job at WKDA Radio as a receptionist after arriving in Nashville from Birmingham, Alabama, relocating with her husband Rayford, who had chosen to attend Vanderbilt University and play football for the Commodores; and

WHEREAS, after eight years at the radio station, Donna Hilley joined an advertising and public relations firm on Music Row, an auspicious move that reunited her with her former boss, WKDA-owner Jack Strapp, who was creating a publishing company that would become internationally known as "Tree"; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Hilley officially joined Tree Music in 1973 as an Executive Assistant to the Board, and, in 1978, she was named Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, which position she held until 1994 when she was named President and Chief Executive Officer; and

WHEREAS, a remarkable business leader, Donna Hilley was the driving force who oversaw the landmark sale of Tree International to CBS, now Sony Entertainment, Incorporated, in 1989, thereby doubling the multi-million dollar value of Tree in short order; and

WHEREAS, an executive with vision and the strength of her convictions, Ms. Hilley expanded the scope of the company to new areas, including Madison Avenue advertising, Hollywood films and television, cable television, political campaigns, and other avenues not formerly traveled; and

WHEREAS, a shrewd evaluator of the worth of music publishing copyrights, Donna Hilley negotiated the purchase of more than 60 major catalogs for the company, including those of music legends Buck Owens, Jim Reeves, Conway Twitty, Merle Haggard and Bill Anderson; her purchase of Little Big Town Music in 1998, along with several major songwriters' catalogs, surprised the entire music industry when she obtained 4,000 songs and increased her company's catalog to approximately 100,000 copyrights; and

WHEREAS, a gracious and caring lady who always maintained a "family" atmosphere at Sony/ATV Music Publishing Nashville, Donna Hilley achieved the summit of her profession, earning the appreciation of songwriters, the esteem of her peers and colleagues, and the gratitude of women throughout the music industry for serving as such an inspirational role model; and

WHEREAS, Donna Hilley is a member of the Country Music Association, the Gospel Music Association, the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, and the Nashville Entertainment Association; and

WHEREAS, highly respected and admired by her peers and colleagues in the music industry, Donna Hilley is a former Chairman of the Board of the Country Music Association, a past president of Leadership Music, and a current member of the Advisory Board of the Tennessee Film, Entertainment and Music Commission; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Hilley has served astutely as a past board member of the Gospel Music Association, the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, the W.O. Smith Nashville Community School, and the Nashville Symphony Association; and

WHEREAS, an active and important member of her community, Donna Hilley is currently a member of the Metropolitan Nashville Sports Authority, the Board of Directors of SunTrust

Bank, and the Board of Trustees of Belmont University; she is a former member of the board of University School and the Nashville Chamber of Commerce as well as a past advisory board member of Belmont University, Ronald McDonald House, and First American Bank; and

WHEREAS, renowned in the music industry for her wisdom and alacrity, Ms. Hilley is a member of the board of the National Music Publishers Association, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, the Country Music Association, and the Nashville Songwriters Association International Foundation; and

WHEREAS, named as one of Country Music's 10 Most Powerful People by *Entertainment Weekly* in 1992, Donna Hilley's commitment to excellence has been manifested throughout her life; she was named "Woman of the Year" by the Business and Professional Women's Club in 1978, "Lady Executive of the Year" by the National Women's Executives in 1984, and one of the "Women We Admire Most" by *Mirabella* magazine in 1994; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Ms. Hilley was the recipient of the Belmont University School of Music's Applause Award in 1992, won the President's Award from Leadership Music in 1993, received Belmont University's Award of Excellence in 1997, and, in 1998, was selected for the National TV committee for the 1999 Grammy Awards Show; and

WHEREAS, a deeply spiritual individual who readily displays her faith, Donna Hilley exemplifies the allegiance to family and community that is characteristic of a true Tennessean; she looks forward to spending more time with her family, especially her beloved crew of grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career in the country music industry, Donna Hilley has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of her staff and colleagues, songwriters around the globe, and the entire music industry; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Ms. Donna Hilley on her truly extraordinary career as one of the most powerful figures in the music industry, offer our profound thanks for her outstanding community service, and extend our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.